

Das Deutsche Haus (The Athenaeum)
401 East Michigan Avenue
Indianapolis
Marion County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-63

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

DAS DEUTSCHE HAUS

(THE ATHENAEUM)

Location: 401 East Michigan Avenue, Indianapolis, Marion
County, Indiana

Present Owner: The Athenaeum Turners
and Occupant:

Present Use: Social club

Statement of
Significance: The building is an example of German cultural and architectural influences in the midwest during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Romanesque architectural forms are used on the exterior of the first phase of the building, Renaissance on the exterior of the second, but the whole is unified in massing, scale, and materials. The building served as a center of German cultural activity, especially for the Turnverein or gymnastic club.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: The first portion, also called the east wing, includes the east 125 feet (approximately) of the present Michigan Street facade. This portion was begun in May 1893 and, except for the first floor reception rooms for the men, was completed in February 1894. The building was inaugurated with a celebration on February 22, 1894. (Anniversary pamphlet, pp. 17, 18).

The second portion, the west portion, was begun in the summer of 1897 and completed in the middle of June 1898. (Stempfel, p. preceding photo of exterior of complete building.) The completion was celebrated on June 15, 16, and 18, 1898 (Stempfel, pre-titled p.). The "Building License" issued by the City Controller is dated September 10, 1897 and was in force until March 1898 (Socialer album).

2. Architects: The architects for both portions were Bernard Vonnegut and Arthur Bohn of the firm of Vonnegut and Bohn, architects. Their address in 1898 was 608 Indiana Trust Building, Indianapolis.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The documents referred to are in the County Recorder's office at the City-County Building, Indianapolis. The property includes three lots.

- 1892 Articles of Incorporation of the Socialer Turnverein Stock Association, in Miscellaneous Record 14, p. 89, dated January 12, 1892. The purpose of the corporation "is to raise funds to purchase real estate, build, remodel or complete, equip, and furnish and add to buildings and to pay for the same, with a view of having the Socialer Turnverein of Indianapolis acquire title there to." In the meantime the Board of Directors would lease said buildings and improvements to the Socialer Turnverein.
- 1892 Deed February 19, 1892 recorded March 4, 1892 in Deeds 239, p. 251.
The Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance, a Corporation, by John M. Taylor, Vice President, John D. Parker, Assistant Secretary.
to
Socialer Turnverein Stock Association, a Corporation
Lots 11 and 12 in Thorpe's Subdivision of Square 20 in the City of Indianapolis, as per plat thereof, recorded in Land Record "J", p. 48. (These are adjacent lots 67-1/2 feet wide and 202-1/2 feet deep.)
- 1893 Warranty Deed, March 11, 1893, recorded March 11, 1893 in Deeds 252, p. 135.
Charles W. Sutton and Rose Sutton, his wife
to
William Haueisen
Lot 10 in J.D. Thorpe's Subdivision. (This lot is adjacent to and south of Lot 11 and of the same dimensions as Lot 11. Haueisen held it for the Turnverein until 1896).
- 1896 Warranty Deed July 27, 1896, recorded July 27, 1896 in Deeds 287, p. 498.
William Haueisen and Charlotte Haueisen, his wife
to
Socialer Turnverein Stock Association
Lot 10.

4. Contractors and suppliers:

For the second portion, the following is a list of contractors. All firms are located in Indianapolis unless otherwise noted. (Stempfel, near back of book, in English):

Stone masonry	Bernhardt & Dammell
Brick masonry	J.C. Pierson & Son
Structural iron work	Heterington & Berner
Ornamental iron work	Tobias Roch
Cut stone work	G. Ittenbach & Co.
Terra Cotta	Indianapolis Terra Cotta Co.
Carpenter work	Ernst F. Kottlowski

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Plastering & stucco work	Charles McGarvey
Painting	F.J. Mack & Co.
Stair work	Albert C. Mueller
Tin, galvanized iron	H.W. Laut & Co.
Fl & slate	
Electric work	Sanborn Electric Co.
Cement work	Julius Keller
Steam heating, plumbing & gas fitting	Kirkhoff Brothers
Furniture	H. Lauter; M.S. Huey & Son
Stage scenery & machinery	H. Meizner, Chicago
Electric & gas fixtures	Cassidy & Son, New York
Marble & marble mosaic work	Bortoli Schoone Mosaic & Marble Co., Cincinnati
Art glass	Daniel Stewart; Edward Schurmann
Chairs	A.H. Andrews Co., Chicago

5. Original plan and construction: See the photographs in Stempfel, some of which are reproduced for the Historic American Buildings Survey. In Fest Zeitung are given the basement and first floor plans of the first portion of the building. The plans of the completed building--basement, first, and second floors--are given in Stempfel, at the back of the book. Comparison of the two sets of plans shows that, in the more recent plan, two kitchens were built at the central rear part of the basement of the first portion, one at the rear of the central stair hall and one added at the south wall of the boiler room. Some related minor modifications occur at the first floor directly above the kitchens. On the 1898 plan the room names are called out in English, except for the bar rooms or lounges, where the German Kneipe is retained.

The 1898 first floor plan shows the development of the site. There is a planting strip in front of the building on the two street sides and at the rear corner (southeast) of the lot a garden with a roofed orchestra shelter and an arbor. In the Socialer album are bills to nursery men, one dated April 15, 1898 for planting ten shade trees and another dated June 1, 1898 for forty-five evergreens in tubs.

An interesting interior detail is still seen at the small entrance (second from the right) of the north facade. A channel track has been built at one side of the staircase leading to the basement and to the first floor. This is said to be a bicycle track.

6. Alterations and additions: As noted in Part II, both bowling alleys have been removed from the basement and have been replaced with hardwood flooring (the date is not known). The original gas and combination gas-and-electric lighting fixtures within the building have been replaced. They may be seen in Stempfel.

The outdoor gas lighting standards in the beer garden have been removed. The present pair of gas bracket fixtures at the members' entrance on East Michigan Avenue (second entrance from right) have been installed since August 1970.

The ground level "Area" on the 1898 plan has been enclosed with a stone wall and windows above. This was originally a porch on the east side of the Concert Hall wing and facing into the Garden. The orchestra shelter has been modified. On February 22, 1918, the change of the name of the building from Das Deutsche Haus to The Athenaeum was announced and the stone plaque above the concert hall entrance was replaced with a new one bearing the new name (Indianapolis News and Indianapolis Star.) Anti-German sentiment during World War I brought about the change in name.

At the west wall of the gymnasium, windows have been added from the high circular windows to the level of the wainscot cap (Stempfel and owner's photograph).

Dates and architects for remodeling are not known.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Building:

The architects: Bernard Vonnegut was born in Indianapolis on August 8, 1858. He studied two years at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, then went to the Polytechnic Institute in Hanover, Germany. Upon his return to the United States he worked for George P. Post in New York, then in a few years moved to Indianapolis and began practice in partnership with Arthur Bohn, continuing in practice until his death on July 9, 1908 (Withey, p. 620). Bernard Vonnegut is listed as a member of the Socialer Turnverein in the Amendments filed August 7, 1906 to the original Articles which are recorded in Miscellaneous Record 2, p. 65, on January 23, 1871, at the Recorder's Office, Indianapolis.

Arthur Bohn was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1862, but he was raised in Indianapolis, studying architecture under the local architects. From 1883-1885 he took two years' supplementary training in Germany. On the death of Bernard Vonnegut, his son Kurt joined the firm, which became Bohn, Vonnegut, and Mueller, and Arthur Bonn became head of the firm (Withey, p. 64).

The Socialer Turnverein: The Socialer Turnverein Stock Association had its first meeting on January 12, 1892 and elected the following directors: Hermann Lieber, Albrichy Kipp, William Haueisen, Henry Schnull, and Clemens Vonnegut (Anniversary pamphlet, p. 17).

Socialer Turnverein means Social Athletic Club. Das Deutsche Haus was to be not only the home of the Turnverein, but of other organizations: German-English School Society, German-American Veterans Society, Turner Building and Savings Association (Anniversary pamphlet, pp. 17-18, and Stempfel).

The need for the building arose from the large influx of German immigrants in the 1880's and early 1890's. (Athenaeum Turners pamphlet, p. 15). A gymnasium school was conducted in the east wing, the small auditorium was used for lectures and important events were accommodated in the large hall of the west wing. From 1898 to 1923 the building was used as the national headquarters of an association of Turnvereins. In 1907 the Turners school for training physical education instructors, which had been founded in Milwaukee in 1866, was transferred to Indianapolis and was named the Normal College of the American Gymnastic Union. This was merged with Indiana University in 1941 and was conducted in the Athenaeum as a junior college (Athenaeum Turners pamphlet, p. 17). At an annual meeting April 6, 1938, the Socialer Turnverein voted to rename the organization the Athenaeum Turners (Socialer album).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: A photograph, 8" x 10", of the interior is in the owner's possession.

2. Primary and unpublished sources:

Documents in the County Recorder's office, City-County Building, Indianapolis.

Socialer Turnverein Stock Association. An album about 9" x 15" x 3" thick into which newspaper clippings, bills, etc., relating to the building have been pasted. At the Athenaeum.

3. Secondary and published sources:

Athenaeum Turners 1851-1951. Pamphlet, at Athenaeum.

"Deutsche Haus Passes". Indianapolis Star. February 23, 1918.

Fest Zeitung zur Feier der Einweihung des Deutschen Hauses. Tribune Publishing Co., February 22, 1894. In newspaper form, mounted in Socialer album, above. Includes floor plans of the first portion of the building.

Indianapolis News. February 23, 1918. Photograph of the Athenaeum.

Indianapolis Turnverein Seventy-Fifth Anniversary 1851-1926. November 12 and 13, 1926. Pamphlet, at Athenaeum.

"New Deutsche Haus Social Turnverein Give a Housewarming---- Description of Building". Indianapolis Journal. undated. Clipping mounted in Socialer album, above.

Stempfel, Theodor. Fünfzig Jahre unermüdlichen Deutschen

Strebens in Indianapolis. Indianapolis, 1898. Pages are unnumbered. This book contains a large number of photographs of the building, interiors and exteriors, and floor plans of the completed building.

Withey, Henry F., and Elsie Rathburn Withey. Biographical Sketches of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles, 1956.

D. Likely sources not yet investigated:

Blueprints of original working drawings are in files of Bohlen, Meyer & Gibson and Associates, Architects, Indianapolis. W.I.S. July 30, 1971.

Prepared by Wesley I. Shank
Iowa State University
June 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is an excellent example of Germanic architectural influence in the Midwest during the latter part of the 19th century. The building is a monument to the organization of Americans of German descent who dedicated themselves to cultural and physical development. The first phase of the building (east wing) is an expression of the German Romanesque style while the west wing is in the Renaissance style. The west wing has a handsome frontispiece in the Renaissance style.

2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 190'0" x 180'0". Number of bays: Thirteen irregular bays across the facade. Number of stories: Two stories with a full basement. Layout, shape: U-shape with the west wing somewhat longer than the east wing.
2. Foundations: Rock faced stone laid up in an ashlar coursing with a beveled limestone cap defining the first floor on the facade (north) and the west elevations. Stone foundations carry around the tower at the northeast corner of the building. However, the stone work steps down at the tower and the beveled cap is terminated. Other exterior foundation walls of stone are terminated at the finish grade line.

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3. Wall construction, finish and color: Dark red brick laid up in common bond on the facade that was completed in 1894. A stone belt course defines the second floor line. The westernmost element of the facade, north elevation is treated in a totally different manner and was completed in 1898. It has alternating horizontal bands of stone and brick flanking the main entrance, a projecting cornice defines the second floor. The red brick is laid up in common bond. The walls at the second story are also of red brick laid in a common bond. A similar system of masonry construction was used on the west and south elevations.

The most unique wall of the structure is the east elevation of the west wings which opens onto the garden at the south-east part of the site. Here the first story has six square piers which defined five open bays on the east and one bay on the north. This open loggia was later enclosed with wooden frames and fixed glazed panels of several sizes. The bays are expressed as a series of flat arches of wooden construction. Above each column is a carved wooden wreath with swags. The second floor is defined by a wooden entablature. Square wooden columns with a carved geometric design on wooden bases define the bay system at the second floor which corresponds to the bay system below. Each bay is divided into four units, and each unit has a wooden double hung window defined at its base by turned balusters and a continuous sill. The window jambs are defined by turned wooden colonnettes on high brackets which align with the balusters under the windows. A wooden entablature defines the third floor. The treatment of the third story is similar to the second story except that the square columns have a different applied design. They do have bases and they have a pseudo-ionic cap versus the stylized ionic cap at the second story. Instead of colonnettes to define the window jambs, plain rectangular wooden mullions are used. The balustrade system below the windows is similar to the one at the second floor. The sills of these windows are not continuous (cf., second story) but are set back of the face of the mullions and columns. A continuous horizontal member defines the heads of the windows and bears on the ionic caps. Above this member are a series of punched openings, glazed, in wooden frames. These openings have the same horizontal dimension as the windows below. Above these openings is a continuous wooden entablature. It is not only an excellent solution but is one of the most interesting solutions of late 19th century wooden construction in Indianapolis.

4. Structural system, framing: Wall bearing and skeletal. Round cast iron columns support the first floor at the west wing and the gymnasium at the east wing of the building. Most other framing is wall bearing with iron and timber spans.

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5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: Porch on north elevation of east wing has eight risers, the first two concrete and the remaining ones of stone. They are covered by a one story projecting porch. Two freestanding Roman doric columns on high bases and spanned by a stone lintel and flat deck define the stairway. Stone balusters and stone railing link the column bases with the north wall.
6. Chimneys: Rectangular red brick chimneys. Several are interior stacks and the others are outside end chimneys. Some of the original chimneys have been shortened when one compared thier outline to a series of old photographs.
7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main doorway on the north elevation of the east wing is a semi-circular stone arch. The faces of the alternating stone voussoirs are projected. Stone bases with banded stone engaged columns with doric caps flank the arched opening. The column treatment is reminiscent of the DeL'Orme French Order. Four wooden doors with glazed panels and a rectangular glazed transom are set in the opening. Thus there is a lunette of masonry above the transom. The doors are defined as pairs by a high wooden pedestal and a small wooden turned column with an ionic cap on the centerline of the opening.

A second doorway on the north elevation just east of the main doorway described above is set in a tower. It has rock faced jambs with a horizontal lintel and a truneated pediment of smooth faced limestone. A shell design in cut stone is set in the pediment. The above mentioned detail is now largely screened by a projecting aluminum canopy constructed about 1960. The door is a wooden paneled door with nine glazed panels over two wooden panels.

The third doorway on the north facade of the east wing is defined by a semi-circular limestone arch set on brick piers behind the porch (cf., porch description). The pair of wooden doors each with a glazed light over four wooden panels and a rectangular glazed transom is set about 3'0" back of the arch opening.

- b. Windows and shutters: Most of the major windows are double hung wooden units and are ina variety of shapes and sizes. The majority of the windows on the facade, north elevation, first story, are double hung units with glazed transoms that have segmental brick arches. Many of the windows at the second story are defined by semi-circular brick arch openings and have a fixed light with flanking double hung units. The transom bar and three lights above. The side transom lights fixed and the center unit has a projecting awning unit.

Much of the glazing in the west wing is leaded glass set in rectangular double hung sash.

The simple double hung wooden windows at the second and third story of the loggia have been described under "Wall construction."

A variety of stained glass patterns and colors are used on the north and west elevations.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The west wing is a hipped roof with the ridge running north to south. The east wing is gabled. The roof joining the two wings is gabled at the west and hipped at the east. The ridge is parallel to the facade (north elevation), and has two projecting gables on the facade. The roofing material is slate.
- b. Cornice and eaves: Stone cornice, brick frieze and stone architrave at last wing. Simple wooden cornice elsewhere.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: A series of hooded copper covered dormers on the north elevation and east elevation of the east wing. There are two small circular copper covered cupolas on hipped ridge of east wing. Three stoned brick towers at northeast corner of building, circular in form and capped with a conical roof of slate. A second brick tower octagonal in form, north elevation, is capped with a stilted polyfoil sided roof with an agre silhouette.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

Basement: U shaped plan with the west wing being somewhat longer than the base (north) or the east wing. The east wing used to have a four lane bowling alleay and a kneipe that was L shpaed with a storage area at the south end and a series of toilets and alcoves along the north side of the building. The bowling alleys have been removed and the space is now part of a large dining and lounge space. The base of the U has an east-west corridor with a series of spaces on the south (kitchen, boiler room, men's room and a small dining alcove on the north with a series of small offices east of the alcove). The east wing has a short east-west corridor which is a continuation of the corridor of the base leg of the U with a small dining room and locker room on the north and a large dressing room and dining room in the east wing. The dining room originally functioned as a second bowling alley.

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First floor: West wing has a small auditorium at the south then a double loaded central corridor, north-south axis, with a series of parlors and toilets on either side. The corridor opens into a large foyer and stairway. Central block or base leg of U has a central double loaded corridor with a series of dining rooms on both sides of the east-west corridor. East wing has a large gymnasium south of the corridor with a series of meeting rooms north and south of the corridor. This used to be a large dining room.

The east wing has a balcony opening into the gymnasium, an east-west corridor connecting to the central one and a series of offices on the north. The offices used to function as an assembly room and library.

The first and second floors of the east wing have been used by Indiana University until the summer of 1970.

2. Stairways: The main stairway at the west wing of the building is a symmetrical divided flight at the vestibule (ground level) and is of wooden construction. At the first floor, a central open flight of wooden stairs leads to a landing where the stairway becomes an open symmetrically divided flight of wooden construction. The stairway walls have paneled wainscots, square newel posts, turned balusters and hardwood railing. The stringers are plain. It is an extremely elegant and finely detailed stairway.

A second stairway on the north elevation is an enclosed two flight wooden unit. The outside entrance is at the landing, thus one flight down to the basement and one flight up to the first floor. The stairway has a wide groove along the walls both up and down so that bicycles could be wheeled down to the basement or up to the first floor.

A third enclosed wooden single flight stairway gives access from the north side of the building up to the first floor corridor adjacent to the gymnasium.

There are two additional enclosed double flight wood stairways in the building.

3. Flooring: Basement: Hardwood and concrete. First and second floor: Hardwood. Vestibule at main entrance: Mosaic tile.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Basement: Wood paneled and plastered walls, plaster and acoustical tile ceilings. Stamped metal ceilings can still be experienced in several service spaces and it is possible that the acoustical tile units have merely covered up large areas of this

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metal type ceiling. First and second floor: Wood paneled and plastered walls, plastered and acoustical tile ceilings. Some of the woodwork has been painted or removed.

5. Doorways and doors: Most of the wooden doors are six panel, two tiered units set in simple frames. Some of the framed openings had open ornamental lattice work but this has been removed.
6. Special decorative features, trim and cabinet work: A fine ticket booth of wooden construction is located in the vestibule of the main entrance. It is polyfoil in plan, seven sided, with leaded stained glass ticket windows. Numerous additional elements of hardwood trim are of considerable interest.
7. Notable hardware: Most of the original hardware has been replaced.
8. Mechanical equipment: Heating: Gas fired boiler, low pressure steam. Many of the radiators appear to be original or were installed early in the 20th century. Lighting: Electrical and modern. None of the gas light fixtures appear to be extant. Plumbing: Modern.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The facade is the north elevation and is parallel to Michigan Street. The west elevation is parallel to New Jersey Street. The north and west elevations are set back about 20'0" from the property line. An alley is the east property line (it was formerly named Adelaide Street). The south property line is an alley. The building is located at the southeast corner of Michigan and New Jersey Streets.
2. Outbuildings: A small but well sealed bandstand of wooden and brick construction is located at the southeast corner of the site and opens, diagonally, onto the beer garden which is defined by the east elevation of the west wing of the building.

Prepared by David R. Hermansen
Ball State University
August 1970

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a cooperative project in 1970 between the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and the Historic American Buildings Survey. During this project, nine buildings in

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Indianapolis were measured and drawn, and sixteen more were recorded with professional photographs and written data.

The project was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Measured drawings were prepared by student architects under the direction of Professor David R. Hermansen of Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana. Professor Wesley Shank of Iowa State University prepared the historical data, and Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographers, provided the photographic record. H. Roll McLaughlin, FAIA, State Preservation Coordinator, President of the Historic Landmarks Foundation, and members of the HABS Advisory Board, served as consultant throughout the project.